



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUL 30 2018

OFFICE OF
ADMINISTRATION
AND RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT

The Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Carper:

Thank you for your letter of February 6, 2018, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding grant awards. Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler asked that I respond on his behalf.

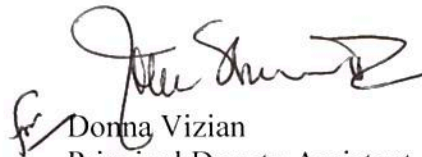
I encourage you to again review the EPA awards on USASpending.gov, which is managed by the U.S. Department of Treasury. Much of the apparent decline in grant funding cited in your letter can be explained by an update to this website. From May 2017 to March 2018, the Department of Treasury stopped updating the legacy USASpending.gov site and instead updated a temporary site targeted for transition, which was accessible at Beta.USASpending.gov. During this transition, USASpending.gov was still accessible to the public, but data was frozen as of mid-2017. In March 2018, the Department of Treasury concluded the use of the temporary site, converted Beta.USASpending.gov to an updated USASpending.gov site, and transitioned all data to the updated site. The EPA awards are now up to date on USASpending.gov. We continue to award grant money and report it appropriately.

As discussed in our letter of February 14, 2018, on this topic, applications for competitive and noncompetitive EPA funding may be denied by EPA career staff for a variety of reasons unrelated to direction from a political appointee. For example, an applicant may not be eligible for the grant program or may not score high enough on ranking criteria for a competitive award. As also noted in this previous letter, only seven grants have been denied based on the centralized review process described in that letter. Please refer to the February 14, 2018, letter for a list of the grants that have been denied based on the centralized review process. Well over 99% of the grant actions subject to these reviews were approved as of January 22, 2018. Please note that the grant on the February 14 denial list involving \$325,000 in funding for Bay Journal Media was subsequently awarded.

Subsequent to our letter of February 14, 2018, a new protocol was put in place regarding the review of competitive grant solicitations. The previous protocol was rescinded and the new protocol does not require headquarters and regional program offices to submit draft competitive grant solicitations to the Office of Public Affairs for approval. Please see the attached rescinded protocol, as well as the new protocol and an explanatory email from Denise Polk, Director of the Office of Grants and Debarment.

Thank you again for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Kristien Knapp in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at (202) 564-3277 or Knapp.Kristien@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Vizian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "V".

Donna Vizian
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman